

Clayton Mayor.

Martis xix. die *Octob.* 1680. Annoque Regni Regis *CAROLI*
Secundi Angliæ, &c. xxxii.

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to Print his Sermon lately Preach-
ed at the Guild-Hall Chappel, before
the Lord Mayor and Aldermen.*

Wagstaff.

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LIGHT out of DARKNESS.
IN A
S E R M O N

PREACHED
before the Right Honourable
Sir **ROBERT CLAYTON K^t**
L O R D M A Y O R
OF THE
C I T Y of L O N D O N,
In **G U I L D - H A L L** Chappel,
The 26th of *Sept.* 1680.

On Zech. XIV. 7. In the Evening it shall be Light.

Wherein are Contained , Rules how to support our Selves
under Dark Providences , when they seem to supercede
Divine Promises.

Also , Directions how to obtain a Prospect of Serene and
Happy Times.

By *SAMUEL SMITH*, Ordinary of *Newgate*,
formerly Fellow of *St. John Baptist's Colledge* in
Oxford.

*Psal. 97. 2. Clouds and thick Darknes are round about him, yet Righteousnes and
Judgment are the Habitation or Stability of his Throne.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *Tho. James*, for *William Leach*, at the Crown in
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1871

To the Right Honourable
Sir ROBERT CLAYTON, K^t
LORD MAYOR,
AND THE
COURT of ALDERMEN.

My Lord,

I*t is Safe and very Commendable, for every Magistrate to take the prospect of his Duty from the Watch-tower of Circumspection, by consulting the Infallible Oracle of the holy Scriptures.*

Herein it is promised to such who fear the Lord, that in difficult Times, and in perplexing Doubts, he will guide them in untrodden Paths, and make the darkest Dispensations of his Providence, if not plain and clear before them, yet comfortable in the Issue.

Your Honour hath signalized your Wisdom, Courage, and Fidelity, in the happy Conduct of this Renowned Metropolis, under the Banner of Truth and Peace. Yet the Jews say, That God gives no man the Title of Saint, until he be dead.

So needful is perseverance in a course of Piety and Righteousness, not only to make a Magistrates Fame survive and spread unto Posterity; but also, to beget an universal Spring in Vertue, by the impregnating influence of his good Example.

While Vulgar minds have turned Giddy, and sordidly complied with Factionous Novelty; your Honour,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

now, as another Aristides, hath cleaved to Principles of Uprightness, amidst all Commotions in Church and State.

As you were unanimously chosen to sit in the Pretorian Chair, so you have in every respect discharged that Duty, which correlates to so high and weighty a Trust.

Neither the Syrene Charms of Popular Applause, have puffed you up, in your steady Impartial Administration of Justice, joyned with the Amiability of Moderation.

Nor hath the fear of rude Clamors, made any impression upon your undaunted Fidelity, to slacken the Reins, or betray the prudent Ends of Government.

May your Lordship, with the rest of those Worthy Senators, who influence the publick Counsels of this Metropolis, as Patrons of Righteousness, and Patterns of Loyalty, be shielded by the Supreme Governor of the World: May the present and future Generations, pay due Reverence to You, by a grateful remembrance of your constant Solitude and exemplary Endeavours, in promoting the Tranquillity and Felicity of this Renowned City; which is, and shall be, the hearty Prayer of him, who continues to be

*Your Honours most humble
and devoted Servant,*

SAMUEL SMITH.

ZECH. XIV. 7.

In the Evening it shall be Light.

THe infinite Wisdom of the Supreme Governor of the World, hath in all Ages judged it necessary, to set forth some Providences of such wonderful Intricacy, as may exercise the utmost vigour of Christian Faith and Patience. The most exquisite search of Humane Reason, is utterly incapable of comprehending their mysterious scope and tendency.

Therefore, the Lord to prevent all repining Prejudices against his dark Dispensations, hath furnished us with this foundation of Support, *That in the Evening it shall be Light.*

This Evening, may partly be meant of the last Age of the Christian Church, when the *Jews* shall be converted to their Messiah; which shall be as a miraculous Restauration from the Dead.

This shall not be a mixt day of Brightness stained with Darkness, but one Entire day, in
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an uninterrupted flux of Grace and Mercy.

If it were capable of any Evening, that very Declining time, or Twilight, shall be accounted full of Brightness.

This is a Truth: But I rather understand *this Evening*, to be the whole Series, or Current of Divine Providence, which by Intervales, will be mixt with much Gloominess, as to misapprehensions about the scope or tendency of Cloudy Times upon the Christian Churches; gross Darkness shall cover the Earth, by the Apostacy of many Professors; and Debauchery shall spread, as a righteous punishment on such Apostacy,

Hereupon, the Providences of God will become dark and severely dreadful, in a seeming Reduction of the Times to a Dismal Chaos of Confusion.

Notwithstanding, in the Evening, when Darkness seems to grow more and more to a perfect Midnight, yet even then, *it shall be Light.*

The Observation from the Text is this, It is the Lord's usual Method, not to give out any comfortable prospect of the safe and happy issue of dark dismal Providences, till the Case be desperate in appearance.

This great Truth, 1. I shall demonstrate from Scripture Instances and Examples.

2. I shall shew the reasons, why the Lord delivers not, till Distresses run out into Extremities.

3. I shall set before you some Rules, how to interpret Dark Providences, for your Support under them.

4. I shall state some Directions, how we may gain a Prospect of Bright and Happy times, when we are wrapt up in a Night of Trial and Distress.

5. I shall make an Improvement of the whole, by inferring what our Duty is, upon the fulfilling of so grand a Priviledg; *That in the Evening, it shall be Light.*

Scripture Instances to demonstrate the truth of this comfortable Assertion.

1. After *Adam's* grand Apostacy, when he stood trembling at the Serpents doom, inferring that his own should be more severe, yet behold, the Judg. himself turns Advocate: The Curse upon Satan, is interwoven with the dawning of restoring Grace to rebellious man, in this Fundamental Promise; *The Seed of the Woman, shall break the Serpents head.*

2. In that terrible Night-Vision, wherein the Lord Covenanted to deliver *Abraham's* Seed out of *Egyptian* Bondage, there was presented a shining Lamp in the midst of a smoaking Furnace; as an assuring Pledg, That though they had lain among the Pots, yet they should become as the Wings of a Dove covered with Silver, in an in-

nocent, speedy, and beautiful Restauration from the Severity of their Servitude.

3 When the *Jews dry Bones* were kick'd about in scorn, then the Lord miraculously opened the Sepulcher of their long confirmed Captivity, and restored them with splendor, as laden with Treasure to rebuild the Temple.

Thus a Nation was born to Freedom in one day, and exalted to Safety by a new Creation.

4 Was there not a Midnight of Superstition, and abounding Corruptions in the *Jewish Church* and *State*, when the Scepter was departed from them? What hope was there that ever this Cloud should be dispelled? Yet, even these Mists of Darkness ushered in the Day-star, *Christ Jesus*, to enlighten the *Gentiles*, and become the Glory of his People *Israel*.

Let me give you one Instance more in your own Experience, Was not a thick Cloud on the Eye of the Clearest Understanding, to conceal from us the proper Means of Slackning or Extinguishing that Dreadful Conflagration, which burst out to the Consumption of all our precious and delectable Injoyments?

And yet, even then, we were hid in the midst of a Devouring Fire; So preserved, that the Sons of Violence durst not in that Extremity, take the Advantage to assault our Persons; thereby to out-act the Cruelty of the Flames. Is not our City

City revived, as a Phoenix, out of its very Ruins?
Built fairer and firmer by an Awful and Wonderful Restauration?

Surely, Its very Dust was precious to that God, whose Good-will continued to dwell in the Flaming Bush, to give it a fresher *Verdure*.

May this City of Solemnities become a Pattern of Reformation to the whole Nation. This will strike a Terror into Restless Incendiaries, who even execrate our greater Lustre, as the Center of the Lords delight.

I hope the Envious Viperous Brood of *Jesuits*, who are studious in contriving Mischief, shall never effect our Second Desolation.

And that, while we cleave to the Lord in our Integrity, there shall be a Covering of Defence upon all our Glory.

However, If any Cloud of Malice should stain and darken the Beauty of our present Prosperity, yet the Most High hath Wise and Gracious Ends, in permitting Distresses to expatiate into Amazing Extremities, before he appear to check them. I shall briefly mention some of them.

I Hereby the Lord humbles and tries us, to fit us for Comfort. Thus he led *Israel* thorow Fire and Water, the most Forlorn Distresses; yet, when they bowed with Submission to his Will, he brought them forth into a Wealthy Land.

His Delays are no Denials, nor Arguments of Insufficiency to Help, but only Whets to the Importunity of Prayer, a Touch-stone to try the Sincerity and Vivacity of Faith, Love, Self-denial, and Obedience.

2 *Reas.* Hereby he makes the Mercy of Deliverance appear more Glorious. He beautifies the Work of Salvation, while it is interwoven with Difficulties. Prepared Mercies are longer before they be exhibited. As they are curiously framed with deeper Impressions of Wisdom and Power, so they would not be dispensed with faithfulness, were they entailed upon such, who cannot wait the Lords leisure of Bestowing them.

3 *Reas.* Sudden Help doth not so deeply affect with Thankfulness, nor advance the Heart to so high a Pitch in Duty. We prize what we obtain with Difficulty.

4 *Reas.* It is Wisdom in God to straiten before he relieve us, lest we should ascribe Inlargement to our selves.

The Use serves for Information: Thus, Under all Extremities of Affliction and seeming Ruins of the Church, there lies hid the Seminal Hope of an Happy Restitution; which may command a dreadful Restraint in Enemies, and a Venerable Esteem from Friends.

Those Planets have the sweetest and most benigne

nigne Influence, which are of the slowest Motion.

Let not therefore the Suspension of Gods Help, breed any Suspicion of his Love; because the choicest Exhibitions of Mercy are detained a while, that the Beauty and Bounty of them may gratifie our patient Waiting for them.

Usually all the *Benjamins* of Mercy, are first *Benonies* of Misery.

We many times meet with Storms, which hazard a Shipwrack, before precious Gems and Fragrant Spices unlade themselves into our Bosome.

Sampson's Honey-Comb was the more pleasant, because taken by Conflict out of the Carcase of a Lion; so Mercies relish sweetest, when taken out of the Bowels of the most affrighting Providence.

The Lord settles his Church, by shaking It, that so the Desire of all Nations might Center in Christ, under whose Banner only, they can possess a Secure and Glorious Resting Place.

Be perswaded then, to act this Life of Faith. O the Usefulness and admirable Effects thereof! This scatters our Fears, raises our Courage, cherishes our Hope, silences our Repining, spiritualizes our Duties, evidences the Truth and Strength of Love; brings Light out of Darkness, Life out of Death.

F .ith

Faith is the Parent of Self-resignation to God's Supreme Wisdom, which makes the Soul to expect Comfort in his Time and Method; It prevents any Contrivance how we may free our selves at once of all Discontentedness, by any preposterous or unjustifiable Expedient.

Faith tramples on all the broken Reeds of Creature-props and Dependences.

It abhors the thoughts of Complying with such Sacrilege to God's Dishonour, as to accept of any Creature to become bound with infinite Strength and unchangeable Faithfulness, for the fulfilling of any Promise.

Therefore, in all Straits, suppress the shifting Life of Sense.

This is much like the Sick mans turning from one side of the Bed unto the other. It may give a little ease, or palliated Cure for the present, but cannot root out the habituated Distemper of Discontent with our Condition. Judging by Sense is a low-spirited-life, which produceth nothing but airy expectation from the Creature, and so loses that very Comfort which it seeks, with an impetuous Impatience.

Rather maintain Serenity in your Mind, by Invigorating the Heroical Acts of Faith. This will not leave you Floating on a dark Sea, but will Pilot you to Christ in the Promise, as a secure Harbour. Therefore, amidst all Storms and
Rocks

Rocks, let this steer and over-rule your Course.

But you will say, May not the Providences of God seem to thwart or supercede his Promises? When these are very Gloomy and Tremendous, how shall we do to support our selves, or to demean our selves so, as not to censure them, out of Ignorance or Discontent?

To support our Hearts under dismal mysterious Dispensations, consider these Rules and Directions.

1. *Rule.* You must know in the general, that it is God's Prerogative to keep secret (for some Tract of Time) the ultimate scope of his Oblique and Circulate Dispensations; He will set forth some Occurrences, to puzzle Sense, to silence Carnal Reason, to abate the swelling of a proud Heart. That so, man by his most curious search, may not find out any thing, which God is resolved to lock up in his own Breast. Besides, if every Providence did run in a smooth Channel, where were any Trial of the Faith and Patience of the Saints?

Yea, the most Cloudy and Dreadful Cases, serve to make up the Beauty of God's Government, as White and Black Marble intermixt, makes Checquer-Work the more admired.

Though Dust and Rubbish fly in our Eyes, while the Lord is fitting and polishing the rugged Materials of his Temple, yet we shall see clearly

clearly the glorious Contrivance of the compleat Structure, when the Scaffolds of our Self-conceited-Models which raise Pride and Prejudice, are totally removed.

There is a secret Harmony betwixt Providence and Providence. These, like Fiery Exhalations, seem to clash; yet, as to the main Design of God, they combine to the Stability of our Faith, and the Reward of our Duty in a patient waiting for their appointed Issue.

The Lord can make the Lion and the Lamb Cohabitate, allay the contrariety of jarring Elements, by commanding them into an amicable and happy League.

He can so over-rule all blustering Animosities, that they shall not overset his main Design; but conspire to hasten it to its desired Port: Thus, by variety, the Wheels in Clock-work seem to cross each other, yet, all help forward the universal motion, for the regular pointing out of such set Seasons, which best are fitted to the accomplishment of our Purposes.

Therefore, as the *Israelites* readily marcht after the Pillar of the Cloud in the Wilderness; so, must we follow the Lord's Conduct without repinings, upon the bare sight of our Warrant, though we know not a step of the way.

2. *Rule.* When there is not any particular Promise which faces and suits to a dark Providence,

dence, yet the main Body of the Promises (which are the Common Places or Repositories of a Christians Comfort) may become as a Constellation, to guide us when we are Tost upon the darkest Ocean.

3. *Rule.* Treasure up the Experiences of former Ages, those will hold us up from fainting in Extremities, so that we shall not charge God foolishly.

Awake, awake, O Arm of the Lord, put on Strength as in the Ancient times, as in the Generations of Old: *Art not thou he, who hast wounded Rahab, or Egypt, and cut in pieces the Dragon, or Pharaoh in the Red Sea; Isa. 51. 9, 10, 11.*

It is very observable, That the Lord gave that unruly Death-threatning Leviathan, to become Food, to strengthen the Faith of the *Israelites*. distressed afterward in the Wilderness, *Psal. 74. 9, 10 15.*

Yea, when the Church in *Babylon* lamented, that they saw not their Signs, nor had any Prophet among them to give them any Prospect of Hope, that they should be delivered; yet, they drew an Argument to relieve their desponding Thoughts, from the Interchangeable, yet constant orderly Courses of the Night and Day, of Winter and Summer.

Thus they Reasoned: *Is not the Day thine, as well as the Night? Thou hast prepared the Light, and the Sun.*

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Yea,

Yea, the darkness of the Night, sets off the beauty of the Morning Light, and makes it to be more wonderfully accepted.

Thus ought Christians, not Idly to behold the Face of the Heavens, but to make an Improvement of the Stationary Courses of the Seasons of the Year: We may fetch Relief to our drooping Thoughts, from God's Covenant in Nature, to confirm our Faith in his Redeeming Love, as to the expectation of special Grace and Mercy.

It is very observable, That the Psalmist in Parallel Allusion, says, *Thy Mercy, O God, reaches to the Heavens, and thy Truth, or Faithfulness, to the Clouds.*

The Lord suffers these to gather, and grow big with Black Vapours, even unto a Boisterous Contest; yet in their Dissolution, they perform a Kindness in Watering the dry Furrows of the Earth, to make them Smile with a Fruitful Verdure.

So the Saints Graces, which seemed Imprisoned in an Earthly obdurate Heart, being bedewed with Afflictions, bud afresh with a lovely Lustre.

In all Distresses therefore, let us thus argue, If the Lord order the Contrariant Seasons of Nature, to conspire in a mutual Benefit to the Universe, will he not much more exercise a tender Care over his Church, for whose sake, the whole
Crea-

Creation is guided with a steady unerring Hand; even in such Changes which sometimes stagger the Faith, and tire out the Patience of his Afflicted Servants?

Hence I infer, That when one Providence is complicated within the mysterious Darknes of another, Then, the Word of Promise must be our Staff to lean on, and the Precept our Rule to Walk by.

The most Conflicting Distresses which cross our Hopes and Desires, oftentimes ripen the Promises, to the furtherance of God's Design.

Thus, *Joseph's* being sold into *Egypt*, made way for his Advancement in *Pharaoh's* Court: The Intombing of *Jonah* in the Whales Belly, buried him into Life; It gained Reverence to his Person, being Miraculously preserved, and the Demorage of his Embassage, (himself being plunged into the heart of the Sea) made his Letters Credential to be better attested and believed.

4. *Rule.* When Providences are Dark, Prayer must joyn Issue to clear them up; This is the readiest, most dexterous Key to uncipher these Mysterious Characters, in the profound meaning of them.

Especially when you have an Eye of dependency on Christs prevalent Intercession, for this very purpose.

Worthy is the Lamb slain, who Purchased the Promises, and Ratified them in his Bloodshed, to open the Sealed Book of Providential Mysteries.

The Lord would lose the Glory of his Works, if they should alway be concealed, as illegible Characters, which none could understand; Therefore, he hath ordained the Spirit of Prayer, to illustrate dark Prophetical Passages recorded for future Comfort.

Now, if Prayer obtain not a speedy satisfaction to our Doubts, yet our Hearts shall be quieted with this Consideration, *That all things shall work together for good, to such who fear the Lord.*

Therefore, Genuine Christians will wait, till the whole Platform of God's Government, amidst all Vicissitudes of Changes, shall be presented in One view.

This will certainly be unfolded in the World to come. Then, *Shall we know as we now are known:* That is, We shall plainly see the true Reason, why the Lord vail'd his Providential Actings, as if he had forgotten to be Gracious.

Yea, we shall acknowledge, that he could not have taken a fitter, wiser Course, to bring us to a blessed Station, than by the way of his dreadful Rebukes, when we grew wanton with Mercies, and froward in our Sins.

5 Rule. When you cannot follow God in untrod-

untrodden paths of Providence, yet consider, it is good and safe, to draw nigh to him, in your undoubted Duty.

Resolve therefore, tho he whisper not all his Secrets into thine Ear, yet he shall be sure of the Obedience of the Heart.

Persevere in seeking the Beauty of his Face, when thou canst not participate of his Bounty, nor find out the intricate Windings of his Works.

Conform to his Known Will, when thou canst not spell out his Secret Decrees and Purposes.

6 *Rule.* Justifie God as holy in all his Ways, and righteous in all his Works, when you cannot judge positively concerning them; *Psal.* 97. 2. *Clouds and thick Darknes are round about him, yet Righteousnes and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne:* That is, Equity, Wisdom, and Moderation, are the Stability of his Government.

How awful and yet serene Majesty, is resident in the Lord, while he wraps himself up in most dreadful Appearances.

He ranks these Clouds, while they contest, and rides on the Wings of the Wind, giving a Law unto them, while they threaten to overwhelm us with a Storm. Many times, Dark Administrations are the Dust of his Feet, which
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he raises in order to his merciful approaches towards us: Therefore speak honourably of the Lord, when you are at the lowest, in point of Hope and Help.

Wherein you cannot discover God clearly, it will be your Duty, Modesty, and Safety, to be devoutly blind.

7 *Rule.* Though Providences should be Gloomy and Dreadful, yet be not discouraged, because the most Startling Appearances of God, have usually ushered in the most Remarkable Degrees of Peace and Establishment unto the Church; *Jer.* 30. 5, 6, 17. *Jer.* 33. 6, 10, 11. *Zech.* 13. 8, 9. *Psal.* 71. 20, 21. *Psf.* 65. 5. *By terrible things in righteousness, hast thou answered us, O God of our Salvation.*

He fulfills Prayer many times in such a strange way, which will make our hearts to tremble.

The Lord appeared to *Job* in the Whirlwind, when he came to comfort him, and justify his Righteous Cause against his Censorious Friends. Thus, the place was shaken, when the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost; *Acts* 4. 31. So, *Paul* was struck blind, and taken up for dead, when the Lord chose him to be a Vessel of Mercy and Honour, to bear his Name before the Gentiles; *Acts* 9. 9, 17. Fire came down from Heaven to consume the Sacrifice, in Attestation of Its Acceptance.

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The highest Joys are built on the lowest and most tried Foundation.

The deepest, most boisterous Inundation of Calamities, shall not drown us, if they advance us in Heavenly-mindedness: Hereby we shall gain the prospect of Gods Covenant, Mercy and Fidelity, as a Securing Rain-bow about the Throne of Amazing Justice.

8 *Rule.* Reserve your passing Sentence on the Darkest Dispensations, until the winding up, in their ultimate Scope and Tendency.

As we must be Witnesses of Gods Truth, to the present Generation, and Trustees to transmit it pure unto Posterity; so, when Providences are most stupendious, we must treasure up Prayers, and antedate Praises, for those Salvations, which God will work in After-ages.

We should rejoyce, to think that the Lord will provide more Halcyon days for the successive Generations of the World, though our selves should fall in the Wilderness, and never set foot on the *Canaan* of a Desired Rest.

But fearing, lest this Day-star may be perverted in its benigne Influence, by breeding presumption, in a sinful or slothful, secure state, let it cast an Aspect of Caution, in Conjunction with its comfortable Rays, that none may be misled by the abuse thereof.

1st, Let not Romish Doctors expect, that the Saving

ving Light of the Knowledge of God in Christ, should beam into them, while they willfully yield themselves, as Captives to the Power and Prince of Darkness; or delight to strengthen a Combination with restless Atheistical Workers of Iniquity.

Such are afraid lest the light of Gods Truth should disturb their Security in a Sinful Course; yet there is no shadow of any pretence, under which Antichrist may presume to lie safe from that Winged Desolation which watches to ensnare him.

As the Path of the Just is like the Morning Light, which shines brighter to perfect Serenity in the Conscience; so the Way and Designs of the Ungodly shall perish: For these, *the Blackness and extremity of Darkness, is reserved for ever.*

They may sportingly presume to warm themselves with their own deceitful dying Sparks, kindled out of the Grandeur of the World, and a pompous False Religion; yet, they shall lie down in the shame of Disappointment

When once an Evening of unexpected Terrors shall overtake them, these shall increase to a midnight of desperate Sorrow in a perfect Desolation.

2dly, Let not the Enthusiast pervert this Comfortable Promise in the Text, as if the Kingdom of
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of Christ were to be promoted by the Invention of any Novel Arrogating Opinions, which such Men expect should be idolized for Undubitable Maximes.

These can never usher In, those glorious Accessions of Truth and Peace, promised to the latter Age of the Christian Churches.

Under a Pretence, that, *In the Evening it shall be Light.* Scepticks irreverently pry into the Cabinet of Gods Secret Counsels.

Such, do not with a modest safety advance in the Search of true Wisdom, but rather rudely dictate Rules to the Supreme Governour of the World. Proud Dogmatical Spirits, exalt the Phænomena, or Mock-light of their Wanton Fancies. Under pretence of illuminating others, they despise the Sacred Institutions of Christ, as if those were weak, faint, obscure, Streams of Light, adapted and fitted, only to the Infant State of Christianity.

Such Deceivableness of Unrighteousness, flows not from the Father of Lights, but from Romish perverting Emissaries, the Locusts of the Pit of Darknets.

3ly. There is another Caution, I would give to such, who expect the glorious Accession of *Jewish Converts* to the Christian Churches.

Let them not disturb Christs sweet repose, among the Lillies of Evangelical Vertues, by becoming

coming Thorns and Briars, to tear and rend in pieces his Seamless Coat of Unity and Concord.

The Divisions of Christians among themselves, obstructs the Conversion of the *Jews*, are the Engines which *Rome* makes use of to batter down the Bulworks of our Safety. Fiery Contests among Protestants, scare the Wild Savages from embracing Christs Pure Religion. His Healing Influences, as the Sun of Righteousness, cannot spread to such Nations, who still remain under the power of Pagan or Popish Blindness; when they hear that Christs Doves quarrel one another with as great bitterness of spirit as, That whereby Wolves designedly prey on the Lords Inheritance.

What a shame is it, That these Lovely Twins of Truth and Peace, should be divorced, when as the Fruits of Righteousness can neither be sown nor reaped so advantageously, in a Storm, of Passion.

If we would have Gods Mercy and Truth meet together in fulfilling the Promise of our Establishment, *Let Righteousness and Peace kiss each other* in our own Breasts.

But if a perverse spirit be mingled among us, all Counsels and Means used for Safety, will prove abortive.

Let us not by our Animosities, Jealousies, and Immoralities, attempt that Destruction upon
our

our selves, which all our Enemies could never yet effect: While the *Jews* severally contended in Parties, they were universally overthrown.

Many are in expectation of Glorious Promises to be fulfilled in the Last Age of the World: But we can never become terrible to Antichrist, till all Antichristian Lusts be pulled down in our own hearts, nor till we display the Banner and Beauty of Truth with Unanimity.

This will credit, propagate, maintain, and secure the Protestant Religion and its Professors, in the hearts and estimation of all Men: When the Lord shall restore *Sion* to a more settled State, the Worshippers of his Name, shall see Eye to Eye; they shall agree in the same Sentiments of Religion, and in Candour of Affection.

In the mean time, while it is only Twilight, among the most knowing Christians, let us not reproachfully stigmatize one another in those less considerable Controversies, which at this day perplex the Christian Churches.

The Genuine Spirit and Profession of Christs Pure Religion, is full of Meekness, and not sowed with Envy, Malice, nor any proud Partiality in judging of Opinions.

It doth not wrangle in a Peremptory asserting the Truth lies on the side of this or that Party only.

Such Clashing Corruptions, are Portentous

Fore-runners of Destruction, and not that Divine Light which they pretend to be.

They are rather Wild-fire, thrown into the Sanctuary of God, to fill it with Smoke and Clamor.

We must not turbulently plead for any Truth, tho clear to us, and very considerable in it self.

This will render our Testimony to be suspected in its Validity and Sincerity. We ought with serenity of Mind to wait, till the Father of Lights, shall clear up such Mysteries in Religion, which as yet, may be hid from others of Weaker Apprehensions.

Let none therefore out of an Impatient Curiosity, presumptuously obtrude, or irregularly propagate, any private Conceptions, as if they were Indubitable Maximes, to be imbraced by the Implicite Belief of other men

The Lord hath promised to spread the Revelation of Truth in his own Time and Method, thereby to supersede all froward Contests and rash Forwardness in any, to disseminate their own Opinions, by the Disturbance of Publick Peace and Order. Let this Consideration moderate all Contests about Circumstantials in Religion; viz. That the Forcible Birth of Reformation, is every way as perillous as the Dilatory Production of it.

Such who doubt not of their way, must not proudly

proudly contemn Dissenters. Some are to be pitied in their Errors, when they are not indulged by the neglect of searching after Truth. But a dissembled Compliance, before thorow Conviction, is an Hypocritical Flattery, and will for advantage, secretly undermine Foundation Principles. Truth is best preserved, when those who formerly opposed it, are convinced of their Error; and then, such ought gladly to become its humble Clients: yea, much rather its blushing Captives. With how peaceable Deportment did the very Apostles spread Evangelical Light to the Idolatrous Nations, that they might win them to the Obedience of Christs Scepter. This caused them to triumph, in leading the captivity of the Devil captive; forasmuch as they powerfully insinuated the Truth, by the Conviction of an Holy Life, made amiable by the Exemplarity of Meekness and Heavenly Self-denial.

But the separation of Peace from Holiness, is a secret contempt of the God of Truth, and will prove the Carcase only of Prosperity.

Therefore, let us hold fast the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience, as we expect, that the darkest Providences should be cleared up to us, in a propitious creating of serene and happy times.

Often times the Church of Christ, which is the Darling of his Providence, becomes a fiery Beacon

Beacon by extremities of Affliction, to warn others, that if the Lord's own People violate their Soul Chastity, in not walking according to the Purity of the Christian Faith, even They shall smart severely for it.

Let not the Romish Synagogue therefore, boast of her pompous Visibilty in her Prosperous Iniquities. For, though her outward Painting and Patching in Religion, draw the Wonder of the Nations, before they Wander after her Deceptions; yet Heresies and Abominations (will in due time) undermine a Semblance of Tranquillity, and Strip her bare, as an Harlot, of all the Ornaments which *cover her* obstinate Degeneracy.

The true Church may be Hid for a time, as a Lilly among Thorns; yet *Rome* in all her Glory is not arrayed like one of those Lillies, when stained with Calumny, or rather Beautified with the Blood of Martyrdom.

How comely and prevailing with God, for Deliverance in Distress, are silent Penitential Tears, in the Dove-like Eyes of his People; especially when they retain their Integrity, in defending the Dowry of Truth, and the Standard of Real Holiness.

Light is sown for the Righteous, and Joy for the Upright in Heart.

This shall secretly spring up for such, while dark

dark Providences wind themselves about, in rich Mines of Comfort, through the Labyrinth of their perplexing Doubts and Fears.

Directions. If we would get a Prospect of Bright, Serene, and Happy times; observe these Directions following:

First, Let the Eye of our Faith be cleared up from Prejudice, and steadily fixt upon That vital Influx of Divine Power, Wisdom, and Fidelity in God, which constantly takes care of his Espoused Interest, under all those Convulsion-pangs, which seem to dissolve the very Ligaments of Truth and Peace.

Faith can fetch a Desponding Soul to Life, when Deadly Fears assault us.

Even while we are giving up the Ghost of Hope, Mercy may come forth, to meet us with Salvation.

Thus the Disciples cried out, *It is a Spirit*, when Christ walked on the Sea toward them, to calm the Storm, and allay the greater Tempest (even Fears) in their own Hearts.

Thus the darkest Season of the Night, immediately precedes the Dawning of the Day.

The thickest Throws and Agonies, not only contribute toward, and make Way for, but are the Signal of a Joyful and Speedy Birth.

Even Obstructions (as Divine Wisdom orders them) shall smooth the way to Safety.

A skilful Archer shuts one Eye, to strengthen the Visive Spirits in the other, that he may more dexterously level at the Mark.

So, suppress Carnal Reason, as an unfit Judge of Divine Dispensations; if you would gain the support of God's Propitioufness under seeming Desolations. We should count our selves safe, while the Helm is in God's Hand:

For though he suffers Storms and Difficulties to Encompass us; yet, no Engines shall ever gain their designed Point against the Lord's Inheritance.

2. *Direct.* Be wonderfully Affected with, and Thankful for, the First-fruits of Deliverance; *Zech. 4. 10.* It is very unbecoming, to despise the day of small things; yea, it is a great sin, to pre-judge the Lords Work, by the first view; especially when it is certain, that the Lord reserves his choicest Mercies, as lovely Colours, to be superinduced at last, when he is resolved to express the Beauty of his Providence to the Life; for a Confutation of our impatient Curofity. A thankful Valuation of the least beam of Light, when all hope of relief seemed perish'd, is the only way to bring forward Deliverance to Maturity.

The Lord doth not undertake Works instampt with wonder, to lay them aside, without any care of bringing them to a Perfect Birth.

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The

The widest, deepest, overflowing Rivers,
spring from a little Conduit Head.

So, *Sions* Salvation goes forth at first, like a Lamp
only, before it prove a Constellation of Bright-
ness, spreading over all the Expansions of Dis-
tress.

During the saddest Contexture of Providence,
the Spiritual Glory of Christs Evangelical King-
dom, shall never set, it shall spread the more, by
Opposition; become Illustrious by those very
Fogs and Mists, which ascend out of the Bottom-
less Pit of Popish Heresie, Treachery, and Cru-
elty.

Those very Prayers which seemed lost, shall
return loaden with the Richest and Choicest
Mercies. The Lord will beautifie the Meek with
Salvation, therefore beg a Spiritual Eye, to take
a Prospect of Deliverance beyond the Limits of
Present Sense.

Thus *David*, having obtained Gods Word
only, for the Conquest of his Enemies, trium-
phed before he struck a stroke; so confident was
he of Success.

He cried out, *Gilead is mine, Manasse is mine,*
over Edom will I cast my Shoe: Which was a Sign
of taking Possession of the Promise, as if he were
actually dividing the Spoil on this and that side
Jordan; because God had spoken it in his Holiness
and Veracity.

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How

How much more, should we strengthen our Faith, when the Lord makes the least Stricture of Light, an Assuring Pledge of the Glorious Perfection of Felicity.

3. *Direct.* Lay aside your Selfish Interest, and with a single eye aim at the Lords Glory. Thus the Church affirmed, *That even in the way of thy Judgments* (while the Yoke of their Captivity was firmly wreathed about their Necks) *have we waited for thee, O Lord: The desire of our soul, is to thy Name, and to the remembrance of Thee.* As if they had said, Let us never be delivered, rather than Thy Name should be eclipsed; what-ever becomes of Us, provide for the Imblazoning of thine own Glory.

Be content to stay in the Furnace, rather than not to have your Dross separated.

Be willing to learn the Mystery of Divine Recumbency on the Lords Fidelity, though we be tutored to it by the greatest Exigents.

Impatiency of Spirit, is a Signal of Impenitency, that we are not as yet capable of That Mercy, which we seek, in the frowardness of our Hearts.

Jacob endured many and sharp Afflictions, because he fore-stalled the Blessing by Deceit.

When we snatch at Mercies, as the fruit of the Promise before it be ripe, it breeds the Worm of a Proud Self-conceitedness at the Core, or a Sur-

Surfeit of Sensuality , in abuse of the Choicest Manna.

It is the Property of a Proud Hypocrite, to be Pissical in Prayer , and not able to wait for Gods Salvation.

But an humble Patience , which believes In Hope against Hope , is as a Branch of the Myrrhe Tree, which (some report) preserves Travellers from tiring and fainting, though they walk thorow the Valley of most Deadly Snares and Fears.

4. *Direct.* Submit to the Lords Method of Carrying on his Own Work, though the Means seem very unlikely, weak, and contemptible, yea contrariant to that Model, which we have foolishly fore-cast in our Carnal Wisdom.

Shall the weak Potsherds of the Earth, dispute Gods Sovereign Wisdom and Authority, when they should comply with his severest Dispensations?

It is the undoubted Priviledge of every wise Man, to dispose of the Concernments of his own Family, as Himself pleases.

And shall we not submit to God, who is uncontroulable in Majesty, and unaccountable in his holy and righteous setting out the various Schemes of his Providence, in all the Circumstances of our Pilgrimage? Shall we reject his Conduct, in disposing of the Affairs of Nations?

Shall the Shallows of our reason, prompt us to

repine, whereas all Creatures obey the Law of their Natural Instinct, and wait upon the Lord for his Blessing, in the Execution of their various Offices.

Yea those Creatures, which have an Antipathy each to other, yet are wisely and calmly over-ruled, by a Divine Invisible Hand; so that they conspire, in promoting the Harmonious Stability of the Creation, for a Common Universal Benefit.

If the Lords Providence condescends exactly to number the very Hairs of our Head, can we (in reason) think that he will make a Spoil of Kingdoms, in tossing them from the Center of their Tranquillity, without just Demerit in us, or Reluctancy in Himself?

Get an Interest therefore, in the Unchangeable Love of God; then you will be above the Reach and Hurt of every Outward Change.

5. *Direct.* Put the Promises in Suit. The Lord stirs up a mighty Spirit of Prayer, before he excites Himself to create Deliverance for his Afflicted Churches.

Would we have him awake, and make bare his Arm for our Relief and Defence; We must rouse up our selves from our Security, and stand up to our Duty.

Jacob's Example and Success, who would not desist wrestling, though he limpt, may provoke
Us

Usto Zeal in Prayer : He well knew, that, after a Tedious Night spent in Tears and Supplication, the Morning would dawn in a Solemn Blessing.

Let our Zeal, like His, be confirmed by opposition ; and it is very probable, that This Generation shall survive, to see *Rome* buried in That Desolation, which She contrives for Others : How did a Dark Night of Distress lately involve us, while Antichrist designed (as a Dying Beast bites fiercest) to have slain the Witnesses of Christs pure Religion ?

Yet how wonderfully are Magistracy and Ministry preserved, in the free Exercise of their Functions, because Christ overshadows those Mystical Stars in his Right Hand, and binds them as an honourable Signet on his Arm.

Blessed be God, who hath turned the Dark Evening into a Day of Jubilee, by the disappointment of such an unparallel'd Conspiracy.

What now Remains, but that we should resolve to continue Loyal to God, and his Vicegerent, in the Face and Displeasure of the greatest Dangers.

Thus Stars shine brightest in the darkest Night. Let us hold On, in an even, steady, chearful Course of Righteousness, notwithstanding the virulent Reproaches of the Common Enemy.

This Viper of Detraction, shall not always
Infest

Infest the Churches Peace and Reputation, but shall Swell only, till it burst it self, and be cast into the Fire.

A right-bred Faith, can digest Difficulties, and Extremities of Danger, by turning them into Arguments of Stability; yea, into the brisk Spirits of Triumphant Joy.

But then let us remember, That Preservations prove not real Mercies, but Snares, if not improved by a wise, circumspect, and holy Conversation.

An humble, heavenly Frame, can only sweeten the bitterest Dispensations by Contentment; as also preserve us from a surfeit of Pride and Sensuality, in the highest float of Earthly Peace and Felicity.

6ly, And lastly, Pay those Vows of Self-resignation, which you made when your Lives hung in Doubt and Suspence, because God had no more Assurance of your Love and Obedience.

We are usually very Gracious by fits, when Pangs of Distress are upon us: Then, like *Nephthaly*, we give goodly Words, fair Promises of Reformation; yet, set at Liberty, we soon wax wanton like a wild Hind, and will not be confined within the Verge of God's Righteous Laws.

But there must be a new Creation within us, if we would have the Lord work a new Salvation for us.

Though

Though our Deliverance seemed to have been wrought in a Dream, It was so wonderful; yet our selves, must not continue under the Lethargie of an Impenitent Security.

If any man shall presume to strengthen himself in his Wickedness, and yet expect, that the Lord should save him in Distress, he puts a notorious Cheat upon himself.

The Promise of Deliverance, shall become as a Vanishing-Night-Vision unto such.

Let us therefore, being delivered from our Enemies round about, Edifie our selves in our holy Faith, and walk in the Fear of the Lord, as Incompass with the Comforts of his Salvation.

Would we have the Lord's Fidelity, go forth as a Lamp of Brightness for *Sion's* safety? Let us put our selves to the Blush for our Undutifulness, and multiplied Provocations against the Holy One.

So will the Lord appear in the Glory of all his Attributes, to build us up, with Stability in Church and State.

He shall make us become, not only Formidable to our Adversaries, but also a Bulwark of Defence to Others in Distress.

Then shall it be Verified of *England* (as of *Sion*) that God is in the midst of Her: Therefore, he will help Her right early; He will surround her with his Mercy as with a Shield; till
She

She become the Perfection of Beauty, the Praise
and Joy of the whole Earth: To which State of
Safety and Renown the Father of Lights conduct
us, for the Merits sake of, our Blessed Redeemer;
to whom with the Holy Spirit of Truth, Unity,
and Concord, be ascribed (as most due is) all
Honour, Praise, Dominion, and Obedience,
now and for ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

Titler. supersede, P.29.l.7.read Myrtle, l.29.r.Shallownes

